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# A case study of the National Advancement Plan at Louisiana State University as implemented by the LSU Foundation in the Memphis, Tennessee, area

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**A CASE STUDY OF THE NATIONAL ADVANCEMENT PLAN AT  
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY AS IMPLEMENTED BY THE  
LSU FOUNDATION IN THE MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE, AREA**

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree  
Master of Mass Communication

in

The Manship School of Mass Communication

by  
Elizabeth Nealy  
B.S., University of Phoenix, 2001  
May 2004

## **DEDICATION**

I wish to dedicate this thesis to Cecil R. Phillips, president of the LSU Foundation.

A patient mentor, trusted colleague and loyal friend, who believed in me, encouraged me to pursue excellence and allowed me the freedom to nurture my intellectual curiosity.

Through his example, he taught me the meaning of personal and professional integrity, the value of respect, the practical relevance of statistical data, the art of clarity and precision of words, the power of a well turned phrase...and the beauty of a well-placed comma.

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## ABSTRACT

Because university foundations are facing increased pressures as the result of declining funds and increased competition, they must learn to use more effectively a wide range of marketing activities and demographic segmentation. Prospect identification may be one such tool. The literature on non-profit philanthropy suggests that the demographic segmentation of alumni and prospect screening and subsequent identification may serve as appropriate criteria. This case study examines how giving levels, involvement levels and attitudes of donors may vary as a result of the implementation of the National Advancement Plan, a systematic peer screening tool and communications tool developed for a university foundation. The results of this case study suggest that other university foundations may be able to use similar strategies to identify potential donors.

**Key words:** Philanthropy; non-profit organizations; giving; donations; fundraising; peer-screening, consumer behavior and trends; market segmentation; demographic segmentation; prospect identification; case study; case selection strategies

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **BACKGROUND AND SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

#### What is the National Advancement Plan?

The NAP is a systematic peer screening model and communications tool through which the University can effectively segment donors and establish a network to better communicate with its alumni and friends. Through NAP, key alumni are identified and called upon to rank a comprehensive list of alumni in their area in terms of financial capability and involvement potential. Once identified, these key alumni can provide a “snowball-network” that LSU may use to spread its message.

Once this framework is established, LSU will be positioned to begin more logical and systematic fundraising efforts.

#### Overview of Case Study Project

The single case study was deemed appropriate for this research project because it is exploratory and exemplified a critical case that tested the well formulated theory described later herein.

As competition grows for philanthropic dollars and federal and state funding decreases, university foundations are required to more effectively use a wide range of marketing activities and demographic segmentation to increase their base of alumni support. Prospect identification may be one such tool. The literature on non-profit philanthropy suggests that the demographic segmentation of alumni and prospect screening and subsequent identification may serve as appropriate criteria.

The most significant aspect of this study was to determine the effectiveness or success of the National Advancement Plan. For, if the NAP was deemed a success, its

duplication had merit and the power of its generalizability increased. This researcher sought evidence to prove with some degree of certainty that the NAP accomplished its goal.

The measures of success were deemed increase in alumni giving, increased alumni involvement with LSU, and improved attitudes toward LSU. These measures were deemed logical evidence of the plan's success. Thus, the greater the increase in each of these three variables, the greater the level of effectiveness and success of the NAP.

This case study examined whether giving levels, involvement levels and attitudes of donors may vary as a result of the implementation of the National Advancement Plan, a systematic peer screening model and communications tool developed by this researcher and LSU Foundation's development staff for a university foundation. This case was found suitable to describe and illustrate what was typical (Patton 1990) in the process of making strategic decisions regarding future implementation of the NAP. The results suggested that other university foundations may be able to use similar strategies to identify potential donors.

### Importance of This Research

This research is of valuable importance to the leadership at LSU. The NAP establishes a discrete plan with clearly delineated margins, based on empirical research, benchmarked on reliable data and systematic analysis, and offers the University insight into effective peer screening models and communication methodologies.

This case study relied on analytical generalization rather than statistical generalization. Because it generalizes the set of results from this study's sample of Memphis alumni to the broader set of alumni in other areas (Yin 1994). This permits

logical generalization because if it is true in this one case in Memphis, it is likely to be true in all other cases.

There are three specific justifications for this research:

1. In preparation for LSU's next capital campaign, it is of significant importance for the University to lay a logical framework for identifying and communicating with its constituents for the purposes of fundraising.
2. As part of the Flagship Agenda, LSU intends to raise the level of admissions. To do so, it must attract students and faculty of the highest caliber. If LSU hopes to accomplish this goal, it must have a model in place for contacting alumni who in turn can better promote the University to top prospective students and faculty in their areas.
3. Often, the University is faced with difficult battles in the legislative forum. With a peer screening model and communications tool in place, the administration can call on key alumni in the area to serve as messengers who can spread the University's message.

### Preparation for the Next Campaign

As LSU moves into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and prepares for its next capital campaign, it must begin to establish an effective means of identifying, contacting and communicating with its alumni base. No longer will the University's current method of peer screening and prospect identification suffice. LSU must initiate new models that utilize the rapid flow of information. With the recent technological advancements of the Internet, cable communications, cell phones, fax machines, and the subsequent rapid flow of communication, the pace of everyday life has changed. Information moves and is assimilated at a pace that is much faster and more sophisticated than ever before.

Thus, in preparation for LSU's next capital campaign, it is imperative for the groundwork of this flow of information to be established and the framework for future

fundraising laid. Then, at the appropriate time the University's infrastructure will have been securely established.

### LSU Achieves National Prominence

One of the goals of the University's Flagship Agenda is to target the best and brightest students and faculty from the national pool. To accomplish this goal, LSU must refine its methods of identifying and communicating with them. LSU's student base is ever-widening, particularly since the recent requirements for higher ACT scores and higher GPAs. The University is now recruiting students from a national pool rather than exclusively within the state of Louisiana. Thus, LSU must establish an effective method for identifying and communicating with these students if it hopes to accomplish its goals.

One of the University's goals is to be recognized as a center for academic excellence, in addition to the already deeply entrenched image of LSU as a center for athletic excellence. When the University's publics think of the LSU Tigers, the goal is for this image to symbolize excellence in every arena.

For this paradigm shift to occur, LSU must find more effective ways of communicating with its publics (e.g., alumni, friends, and prospective students and faculty). Only then, will they begin to see the University as a leading contender for learning and discovery in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. LSU's vision is to become a national and international leader, drawing talented faculty and students to its campus. This message needs to be communicated to the public. The message is LSU's reputation as a rising public research university. LSU, ergo — the best university in Louisiana and a national contender — must be communicated better, faster and more efficiently in the competitive market of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Why? Because of increased competition from other



universities for attention, emerging communication technologies that increase the ease and number of competitors and the need to reach alumni who have been previously disconnected from the University to engage them with their alma mater. All of these competitors create a noisy marketplace.

### Message Bearers

From time-to-time, issues arise in the Legislature which the University needs to quickly and pro-actively address through the influence and support of its alumni base. Through an established team of messengers, LSU can quickly and effectively spread its message using the NAP communications model, a well established and organized framework for communicating with constituents.

### Case Study Questions

A frequent criticism of case study methodology is that its dependence on a single case renders it incapable of providing a generalizable conclusion (Yin 1994). Yin (1994) presented the view that considered case methodology “microscopic” because it lacked a sufficient number of cases. Hamel, et. al., (1993) and Yin (1994) forcefully argued that the relative size of the sample whether 2, 10 or 100 cases are used, does not transform a multiple case into a “macroscopic” study. The goal of this study was to establish the parameters and then apply it to all research. In this way even this single case is considered acceptable.

This case study hopes to establish clear parameters and yield valuable “microscopic” evidence to support the value of the implementation of the NAP in the Memphis area, to the “macroscopic” model, defined as the 30 metropolitan areas identified nationwide.

This study focused its attention on answering the three stated case study questions. The results of this study suggested that peer screening research can help more fully reveal factors relevant to donors' behavior.

Through critical research using the Memphis, Tennessee, area as the unit of analysis, this case study seeks to uncover evidence to support the implementation of the NAP. Three measures of its success are deemed increased alumni giving, increased alumni involvement and improved alumni attitudes. The three primary case study questions are:

- RQ1:** How does the National Advancement Plan effect LSU alumni philanthropy in the Memphis area?
- RQ2:** How does the National Advancement Plan effect LSU alumni involvement in the Memphis area?
- RQ3:** How does the National Advancement Plan effect LSU alumni attitudes in the Memphis area?

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING THE NAP**

#### **NAP - Theory Building Research**

The process described in the National Advancement Plan is based on foundational communications research and theory. Communications as identified in this study referred to the transmission of ideas. This plan followed prior research conducted by E. Katz and P. Lazarsfeld in Personal Influence. The authors studied the media's role in communication and found predictable patterns in the flow of communication and the acceptance of ideas. They found this flow followed a two-step process. According to Katz and Lazarsfeld's Two-step Flow Theory, ideas often seem to flow from media source to opinion leaders and from opinion leaders to the less active sections of the population, opinion followers.

Katz and Lazarsfeld observed in the Two-step Flow Theory that messages follow a systematic flow. Their communications model flows from opinion leaders to opinion followers. Social pressures are involved in motivating people to expose themselves and to be receptive to the influence of communication (Katz 1965).

The permeation of ideas plays a role in influencing opinions. For example, ideas often "penetrate the public as a whole slowly and — even more important — very often by interaction of neighbor-on-neighbor without any apparent influence of the media" (Katz 1965). Katz and Lazarsfeld also found that the movement of ideas is horizontal, rather than vertical — person to person. The NAP is patterned after this theory and studies the inter-play of influence on the social and public relations fronts. If the University influences

alumni, those alumni will influence other alumni — neighbor-to-neighbor, following the two-step flow process.

The key is identifying those few key alumni (opinion leaders — transformational leaders) who are esteemed in their community and whose message will be accepted and transmitted through a communication continuum. Personal Influence states, “The trustworthiness of the messenger is a determining factor and plays a crucial role in the communication and transmission of ideas” (Katz 1965).

Alumni are a social stratum with their own generated opinion leaders. These opinion leaders are likely to expose themselves to information regarding LSU. This information is understood by opinion leaders who, in turn, pass it on to other alumni. Therefore, the critical factor this study addressed is identifying opinion leaders through the National Advancement Plan who can, through their influence, help to identify others and communicate the University’s message.

Opinion leaders (key transformational alumni) are deemed “experts,” to whom the group (alumni) turns for guidance while formulating their ideas of what is good or bad politically, socially or economically (Katz 1965). These leaders are transformational because they and “their opinions are respected by their neighbors who are less at home in the world of ideas” (Katz 1965). These leaders are key because they hold a two-fold capacity as a communicator and a relay point in the “snowball network” of communication.

This case study applied Katz and Lazarsfeld’s Two-step Flow Theory and the flow of ideas to a university foundation setting. The NAP’s key alumni informants bear similarities to the opinion leaders described in Personal Influence and follows the same

predictable flow of information. The NAP seeks to determine if there is a correlation between the communication of a university's message through an interpersonal network and its effect on alumni attitudes and involvement.

This study presented integrated data regarding the effect of communication between people as distinguished from the better known aspect of mass media on people. One of its goals was to enhance the University's understanding of donor's behavior, especially the transmission of ideas and its effect on philanthropy. Similar to Personal Influence, the NAP explored the transmission of ideas to participating alumni.

Nationwide, college endowments fell an average of six percent in 2002, the deepest drop since 1974, according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers, and experts expect more cuts in state higher education budgets this year. "For the first time in 15 years, charitable gifts to colleges and universities declined in 2002" (Marklein 2003).

Although social marketing has always been challenging, the current environment makes soliciting help especially daunting. Charities today must grapple with a growing need for their services, shrinking government support for their causes, and fierce competition with other charities. Thus, it is becoming more critical and more difficult for charities to elicit help from individual donors (Bloom and Novelli 1981).

Nonprofit university foundations would be wise to heed the above advice by Bloom and Novelli. To succeed in such an environment, "a charity must rely on an effective promotional strategy: a controlled, integrated communications program to present itself and its services to prospective donors" (Engel, Warshaw and Kinnear 1994).

If we know that 80 percent of constituent giving comes from private donations, then logically, fundraising efforts should focus on identifying these prospects (Nichols 1992; Wilson 1984). Similarly, if we determine what factors play a role in alumni giving, this is crucial information to help more specifically target fundraising efforts (Yavas 1981; Schlegelmilch 1988). Establishing meaningful segments of the volunteer market could lead to more effective targeting of particular groups, and thus, more effective recruitment and retention strategies (Bussell 2002).

### Importance of Identifying Transformational Leaders

In 1978, J.M. Burns introduced the theory of Transforming Leadership. Burns identified transforming leadership as a process through which “one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns 1978). Thus, Transforming Leadership as conceived by Burns, is an ethical, moral enterprise through which the integrity of an organization is maintained and enhanced. Following Burns’ lead, B.M. Bass introduced transformational leadership as it relates to organizational settings. His research found four key factors are involved when considering transformational leadership: charisma/idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration (Bass 1998). Giampetro, et. al., (1998) suggested that transformational leaders are successful in inspiring others. Social psychological literature shows that messages are more likely to be accepted when the messengers are familiar and credible than when they are not (Kelman 1961).

### Importance of the Relationship Between Identifying Prospects, Communicating with Constituents and Fundraising

Because such a large proportion of the revenue university foundations receive is generated from individual donations, it is important that the design of fundraising campaigns maximize the response among these individual contributors (Hibbert 1996).

One key to success is understanding the importance of the relationship between the donor and the organization. There needs to be some kind of personal connection. The NAP achieves personal connections. “Much of the work of fundraising is who you know. We [the Foundation] want to utilize all of our connections. We want to increase our circle of influence,” said Cecil R. Phillips, president and CEO of the LSU Foundation. “I don’t think it is necessarily harder to raise money these days, but it can be if you don’t have the right infrastructure, and this is something that just takes time to develop,” said Phillips.

So, whether it is called silent screening, external screening, outside screening or peer screening, the process is basically the same. The purpose of peer screening is to fish major donors from a large pool of possible donors. Depending on the type of non-profit organization conducting the peer screening, the volunteers chosen for the job might be board members, major donors, parents who are active in school activities, development officers, academic deans or community leaders. They should be people who are actively involved with the organization and sympathetic to the need to raise funds to successfully support the organization.

This research studied individuals who gave cash donations to the LSU Foundation and did not focus on the various factors that influenced different types of output (i.e., time, services, property, stocks, in-kind donations) (Sargeant 1995).

When the use of marketing for fundraising purposes first became popular, university foundations typically adopted marketing techniques that proved to be successful for providers of consumer goods and services within commercial contexts. In recent years, however, fundraisers attempting to recruit and retain donors have realized that it is not sufficient simply to use marketing techniques for the sake of using them. Rather, they must seek an understanding of who their constituents are and what motivates them to give. Further drawing from marketing research in consumer retailing, there is a “benefit from attention to conditions that foster relational bonds leading to reliable repeat business” (Pressey 2000). Wilson (1995), Dwyer, et. al. (1987), Scanzoni (1979) and Ring and Van de Van (1992) further confirm that “all relationships require trust to help them develop. Indicators of high relationship marketing are high levels of trust and commitment between both parties” (Pressey 2000).



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **NATIONAL SCENE OF PHILANTHROPY**

Many university foundations are following in the footsteps of their for-profit cousin organizations in attempting to adopt more targeted fundraising efforts. In some cases, this involves identifying new donors or identifying key factors that motivate giving (Hibbert 1996; Groom 1995; Mathur 1996). In other situations, university foundations have attempted to apply a relationship approach to giving, developing stronger cause-donor relationships with existing donors. A number of university foundations are also segmenting existing donors from their donor database to improve donations (Lynch, 1997).

More effective segmentation allows university foundations to identify different donors and allows for variations in the message content of an appeal. In some cases, university foundations have limited information on donors and thus are restricted to segmenting according to very basic demographic information (Ordway 2000). It should be pointed out that these are not the only factors that should be considered (Lynch 1997). In at least one case, it was found that existing donors' demographic characteristics did not vary across charities, although it did differentiate their behavior. Demographic factors may still be an important segmentation tool (Schlegelmilch 1989).

Stanford should get credit for establishing one of the first and best known national peer-screening models, although that campus admits taking some cues from Harvard and Yale.

Vassar's National Screening Program is called Internal Information Flow.

Kathleen Kavanagh, senior vice president of Grenzenbach Glier & Associates, and former

vice president for development at Vassar College, said in a personal interview that when she was at Vassar the staff would review all of a potential donor's volunteer ratings, as well as those gathered from computer geographic and demographic screenings and from a staff prospect review committee. Looking at multiple ratings "allowed us to see a composite picture of the prospect and determine a specific solicitation target," said Kavanagh. "We know from the experiences of peer institutions that the results of such a screening program can be relied upon as one of the most accurate indicators of philanthropic potential among an institution's constituency," said Kavanagh.

While one of Vassar's primary goals was identifying major prospects, they reported that staff and database prospect identification was much more reliable, citing peers as the least reliable source. Kavanagh said this often occurs because "peers just didn't know the individuals well enough to properly and accurately screen giving potential, and because Vassar found that \$25,000 equaled a lot of money to the volunteer raters."

Vassar also discovered the implementation stage was the most crucial. this stage was often the downfall of the peer screening process. "It is perfectly fine to identify the names of top donors, but there must be clear direction for what to do with the names after they have been identified, and a strong infrastructure must be in place to support subsequent cultivation efforts," said Kavanagh. Thus, the implementation stage must be specific and directed.

Kavanagh suggested, prior to implementing a peer screening process it was important to first, clearly evaluate what one hoped to accomplish and then to formulate a strategic plan with that end in mind. Vassar found peer screening was most valuable as a

cultivation tool for volunteer alumni screeners and served as a natural introduction for the staff to introduce the University's next capital campaign to them.

In April of 1995, Ohio State University instituted the National Peer Screening Program. The development officers received a list of all the prospects identified through the peer screening with information collected on them so they could choose the ones they thought were most likely to give to their programs. According to Kathleen McDonald, the peer screening coordinator in the Office of University Development, in an interview, "Once you've mastered the process of holding peer screening sessions, the challenge is to go beyond simply gathering information. Everyone in development needs to think creatively of ways to put all this information to work. If you conduct peer screening correctly, you can establish an environment for volunteers to suggest future donors who can help meet future fundraising goals. And that's a result that will make everyone—staff, volunteers, and even donors—feel good" (Unal 2000).

Iowa State University began its peer screening program in 1998, termed Prospect Data Mining. According to Iowa State the main goals were assisting in the identification of possible major prospects and providing a continuous supply of new prospects that could be further qualified by the prospect research unit to recognized major prospects. The process was successful in identifying prospects who would have been difficult to identify or detect otherwise. Iowa State expects the success rate to continue to grow as the process continues and matures (McDonald 1997).

Duke University's venture into peer screening began with a charge: find thousands of new major gift prospects for the upcoming \$1.5 billion campaign. In 1996, it embarked on Building Our National Donor base peer screening program (BOND), which combined

aspects of other universities' screening techniques with Duke's own innovations. Duke continues to use the lessons learned from the BOND to better manage prospect data and define constituents. "Although gathering and obtaining this level of detail from our peer screeners was a challenge, our results were well worth the effort. We have discovered many new prospects —alumni, friends, and parents who had less significant giving records and whom we had not been cultivating. Once our research department verified the prospects' gift capabilities, we used the data from the screenings to prioritize our prospect pool," according to Jack Hickethier, corporate relations, Duke University (Joseph 2000).

During every year of its Grand Destiny Campaign, Pennsylvania State University led all universities nationwide in the number of alumni donors, which has steadily increased by 18 percent since 1996 as a result of the implementation of Penn State's Leadership Evaluation and Assessment Program, according to Elaine Rhodes, Office of University Development at Penn State. UCLA, Marquette University, Iowa State University also have similar peer screening programs (Rhodes 2000).

Gainesville Junior College in 1980, and Brunswick Junior College in 1982, also implemented their own forms of peer screening. The technique they used to delineate community leaders—the Positional Method—involved preparing a list of top positional leaders from available official documents, and selecting from this list persons who occupied key positions in designated areas (Seerley 1994).

In a study entitled Capital Campaigns, Eleanor Lee Yeates of Black Issues in Higher Education (Yeates 2001), dealt with the fundraising campaigns of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in the United States (HBCU).

As competition grows for philanthropic dollars, and as federal and state funding decreases, colleges and universities are launching record-breaking capital campaigns. “People hear the word ‘public’ and think the state is funding them 100 percent,” said Dwayne Ashley, president of the Thurgood Scholarship Fund. “They think they ‘pay taxes,’ and that should cover the resources, but state funding is never more than 30 percent to 40 percent, leaving public HBCU’s to raise the rest.” Thus, it is important “to learn new techniques, and technology training to help them do a better job at soliciting and running campaigns” he said (Yeates 2001).

As Yeates reminds us, “Alumni are the No. 1 source of financial support for private colleges and a major one for all schools.” According to the Council for Aid to Education, in 1999 approximately 32 percent of alumni at private liberal arts schools gave to their alma mater, compared to 18.8 percent at public colleges and universities.

At LSU, the alumni base is approximately 12 percent. Further evidence that the University must increase its base of alumni support. Although alumni giving is increasing—now 12 percent—this may take another generation before alumni contributions rise to a significant level. Corporations, another source of revenues, can be generous, but their gifts may largely be an investment in access to knowledge, research and new personnel, making it imperative for development officers to know exactly who their donors are.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **HISTORY OF PHILANTHROPY OF THE LSU FOUNDATION**

Chartered in 1960, the LSU Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, public foundation composed of some 250 business, professional and civic leaders concerned with the advancement of LSU. The purpose of the LSU Foundation is to foster private financial support for LSU and A&M College, the LSU Agricultural Center and the Paul M. Hebert Law Center. The Foundation encourages and receives capital gifts and bequests for the University, including both restricted and unrestricted gifts. The Foundation also manages most of the investments and serves as trustee for most of the endowment funds and other private assets contributed for the benefit of the University.

The LSU Foundation cooperates with the LSU Alumni Association and the Tiger Athletic Foundation. These three foundations form a consortium for voluntary financial support of the University. The LSU Alumni Association conducts an annual fund drive for a broad range of programs, including scholarships, professorships and faculty awards. The Tiger Athletic Foundation conducts an annual fund drive primarily to support LSU's athletic program but on a smaller scale supports academic programs as well.

Most of the gifts received by the LSU Foundation are dedicated by donors for specific academic programs, including scholarships, professorships, laboratory and library resources, and other purposes that benefit named departments, schools, colleges, and museums. This is the primary channel for gifts restricted to academic units and for capital projects, including endowments. More than 3,300 "purpose" accounts (as distinguished from donor accounts) are maintained by the Foundation. Contributions for these purposes

are encouraged by the respective deans and directors of the academic units and by their development staff and faculty.

On February 20, 1960, the first meeting of the board of directors of the LSU Foundation was held. The chairman, Murphy J. Foster, began his first annual meeting stating, "The possibilities are unlimited for what such a foundation could do." Theo F. Cangelosi was chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Troy H. Middleton was president of the LSU System and Lloyd Love was the president of the Alumni Federation.

Then, in June of that same year, C. Arthur Provost, a member of the Foundation's board, took a "discovery tour" to garner recommendations to present to the board regarding how to organize a separate entity — the LSU Foundation. He visited the University of Chicago, Ohio State University and the University of Illinois seeking information.

As a result of his trip and subsequent recommendations, an elite "advisory board" was formed by the Foundation. It was originally limited to not less than 50 and no more than 200 members. This advisory board would be named the LSU Foundation. It was further determined by the board that the LSU Alumni Federation would "handle the smaller gifts and the Foundation would handle the big boys" (John Hunter, Secretary-Treasurer, LSU Foundation 1961).

At a special meeting of the board held on December 9, 1961, with a quorum present, the board of directors of the LSU Foundation elected Louie C. Reinberg as its first director, development fund. Reinberg was appointed by LSU's board of supervisors, and reported to the president of the LSU System and the LSU Foundation's board of directors. At this time, LSU was ranked 21<sup>st</sup> in size compared to other universities in the

U.S. The first annual reporting of the Foundation was in 1963, and announced \$66,132 in total assets. Also, in 1963, the Foundation received its first official residence located in Pleasant Hall.

After 18 years, Louie C. Reinberg retired and on February 10, 1978, Lloyd Moon, Jr. was hired as executive director of development of the LSU Foundation. Under Reinberg's direction, the total in assets had grown to \$4,348,574. At that time, the Foundation was housed in the LSU System Building. Now, with Moon at the helm, O.P. Stockwell as chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Martin D. Woodin as president of the LSU System and Jack O. Colle as the president of the LSU Foundation's board and John P. Laborde as president of the LSU Alumni Federation the next era began.

When Moon left his position as director of development with the LSU Foundation in December of 1985 for employment elsewhere, Charlie Roberts, who had been acting as secretary of the Foundation, assumed the management position. The Foundation staff now consisted of five employees and reported \$30 million in total assets.

On January 15, 1988, Charles L. Solomon was hired as director of development for the LSU Foundation and reported to Roberts. Leaders of the University included, Bert S. Turner, as chairman of the Board of Supervisors; Allen Copping as president of the LSU System; Harry E. McInnis, Jr., as president of the LSU Alumni Federation; and Henry Goodrich as president of the Foundation's board. At this time, the Foundation reported a total of \$42 million in assets.

Solomon resigned in May of 1989, and the board appointed Roberts as the executive director and secretary of the LSU Foundation. with a staff of 14, and a total of \$45 million in assets, the Foundation was gaining momentum. In leadership positions



were Jack Andonie, chairman of the Board of Supervisors; Allen Copping, president of the LSU System; V.D. “Sonny” Devillier, president of the Alumni Federation; and Jeff H. Benhard, president of the LSU Foundation Board.

In July of 1992, Cecil R. Phillips was appointed by the Foundation’s board as executive director of development of the LSU Foundation under the direction of Roberts. Shortly thereafter, on May 10, 1996, Roberts resigned as executive director of the Foundation and Phillips was promoted to that position. With Charles Cusimano as chairman of the Board of Supervisors; Allen Copping as president of the LSU System; William E. “Bud” Davis as chancellor of LSU and A&M; Jack Andonie as president of the LSU Alumni Association; and James R. Peltier as president of the LSU Foundation’s board of directors, the Foundation reported \$97 million in total assets and employed seven employees.

In 1992, with Phillips at the helm as executive director of the LSU Foundation, a five-year plan for the development program at LSU was implemented. The mission was to build a coordinated, University-wide development program, launch a comprehensive campaign and double gift income.

“Before the development office was reorganized and staffed in the Summer of 1992, LSU’s development activities consisted of a number of independent operations. They were not coordinated, not governed by University policies, and not supported by a centralized staff. Further, LSU’s level of private gift income was substantially below that of comparable universities,” said Phillips, during a 2003 personal interview.

Aggregate University-wide accounting prior to 1992 was somewhat speculative. Prior to that time, totals did not include donations to Tiger Athletic Foundation and the

LSU Alumni Association and record keeping was manual and arcane. Until 1985, when the LSU Alumni Association purchased and activated the university's first database (AS 400), records of individual donors' giving history and demographic information were manually entered on index cards and kept in a card catalogue. Understandably, records from 1960 to 1985 are somewhat suspect. Also, prior to 2000, pledges were not included in aggregate gift totals. Therefore, a structure was built to conduct broader and more intensive fundraising drives. The strength and stability of this infrastructure were crucial components prior to launching LSU's first capital campaign.

Also, prior to 1992, information on total gift income to LSU was not available; therefore, there was no basis for assessing status or measuring progress. No overall development strategy existed, and each academic unit and supporting foundation operated independently. University units and organizations were engaged in development and did not meet regularly. Planned giving was being promoted only to the 200 members of the LSU Foundation and not to the alumni community at large, and known estate commitments were only approximately \$4 million. Finally, policies and procedures necessary for campus coordination of development activities were absent or inadequate.

Now, 12 years later, with Phillips serving as president and CEO of the LSU Foundation, the continued support of the board of directors and a more seasoned development staff of 14, and a support staff of 29, the Foundation reports a total of \$279 million in total assets

A baseline of data on gift income to LSU as a whole was established. An organizational plan to blend centralized and decentralized fundraising activities was formed. A development strategy that integrated the LSU Foundation, Tiger Athletic

Foundation, LSU Alumni Association and all academic units at LSU was prepared. Monthly meetings of development staff from all units and support organizations was instituted. Also, regular meetings of the leadership of LSU's administration and the three support foundations (LSU Foundation, Tiger Athletic Foundation, and LSU Alumni Association) was implemented.

A comprehensive system of donor recognition began in 1993 and was termed the *LSU Foundation President's Awards for Lifetime Support*. This system consolidated gifts of all types, all purposes and all income channels (units and organizations) and established a donor recognition system. Additionally, a new "club" was created for estate commitments, originally called the *Fellowship of the Future* and now named the *1860 Society*.

A donor database (IBM AS 400) was built which included lifetime gifts of donors. All data were entered into this database from the former index card filing system for ease and accuracy in accounting. In 2003, LSU's first University-wide database (Sungard BSR Advance) was purchased and activated. This system enabled development officers working for the three foundations to have equal access to crucial fundraising information which made it possible to more efficiently track donors. This new system was officially nick-named "TAILS" (Tiger Advancement Information Lookup System).

Since 1992, the Foundation has added staff to the development office (1992 staff of 1.5; 2004 staff of 14) and promoted services to all units campus-wide, which included: campaign strategy methods, prospect research, building volunteer leadership, personal solicitation, estate planning, proposal writing and editing, and donation agreements and other legal service. The development office staff now actively supports some 25-30

campus-wide units annually in various aspects of their development efforts, which is the largest part of the staff's work.

Also established were revised policies governing access to donor mailing lists, security of donor and prospect information, standards for new endowments, conformance to tax regulations, gift processing and acknowledgements and control of major prospect solicitation.

### LSU Launches First Capital Campaign

A milestone in the history of LSU's development programs occurred on April 18, 1997, when LSU's first ever Capital Campaign was launched. The Campaign announced three key goals:

1. Double the endowment, from \$61 million in June 1995, to \$125 million by June 2001;
2. Double the annual rate of contributions received from approximately \$14.5 million prior to the Campaign to \$30 million by 2000-01; and
3. Receive at least \$150 million in total gifts and pledges of the six-year Campaign period, ending June 30, 2001.

By the end of the second year of the drive, on June 30, 1997, the Campaign leaders announced the following progress:

- ▶ The total of endowed funds (at book value) had reached \$85.4 million.
- ▶ The aggregate total of all gifts received annually had increased to \$16.6 million and \$24.1 million in the two years, respectively.
- ▶ The total of all gifts, pledges, and estate commitments qualifying under the accounting rules of the Campaign had reached \$85.6 million, or 57 percent of the ultimate goal of \$150 million.

The LSU Campaign was coordinated by the staff of the LSU Foundation under the direction of Cecil R. Phillips and the leadership of the 25-person advisory council chaired

by the late Milton J. Womack. The Campaign Leadership Team was a 19-member committee chaired by then Chancellor William L. Jenkins and comprising primarily outstanding alumni volunteers.

The scope of the Campaign was comprehensive. It included all gifts through all the support organizations, including the LSU Foundation, the LSU Alumni Association, The Tiger Athletic Foundation, academic deans' development councils, and University "friends" groups. All restricted and unrestricted gifts for all purposes, including gifts to LSU and A&M, the LSU Agricultural Center and the Paul M. Hebert Law Center, counted toward the ultimate goal. Documented pledges and estate commitments also counted, as did gifts for both endowed and non-endowed accounts.

The priority objectives of the Campaign were scholarships, especially endowed funds that covered tuition; faculty support funds, particularly professorships and endowed chairs that qualified for the Board of Regents Support Fund (BRSF) matching funds, and faculty development funds; educational technology, including computer facilities, instruction-development funds, and multimedia facilities for classrooms; LSU Libraries, including renovations of Middleton Library, endowments for resource acquisitions, and technological enhancements; and unrestricted endowment funds for unforeseen future needs and opportunities of the University.

Another milestone was reached in February 1999 when the Campaign reached its original goal of \$150 million. The event occurred more than two years ahead of the targeted date of June 30, 2001. The achievement was significant because this was the first comprehensive, campus-wide fundraising campaign undertaken by LSU.

The Campaign Leadership Team elected to continue the drive and aim for a new goal of \$225 million. By the fiscal year-end on June 30, 1999, the Campaign total had reached \$167 million. That marked the end of the fourth full year of the six-year drive.

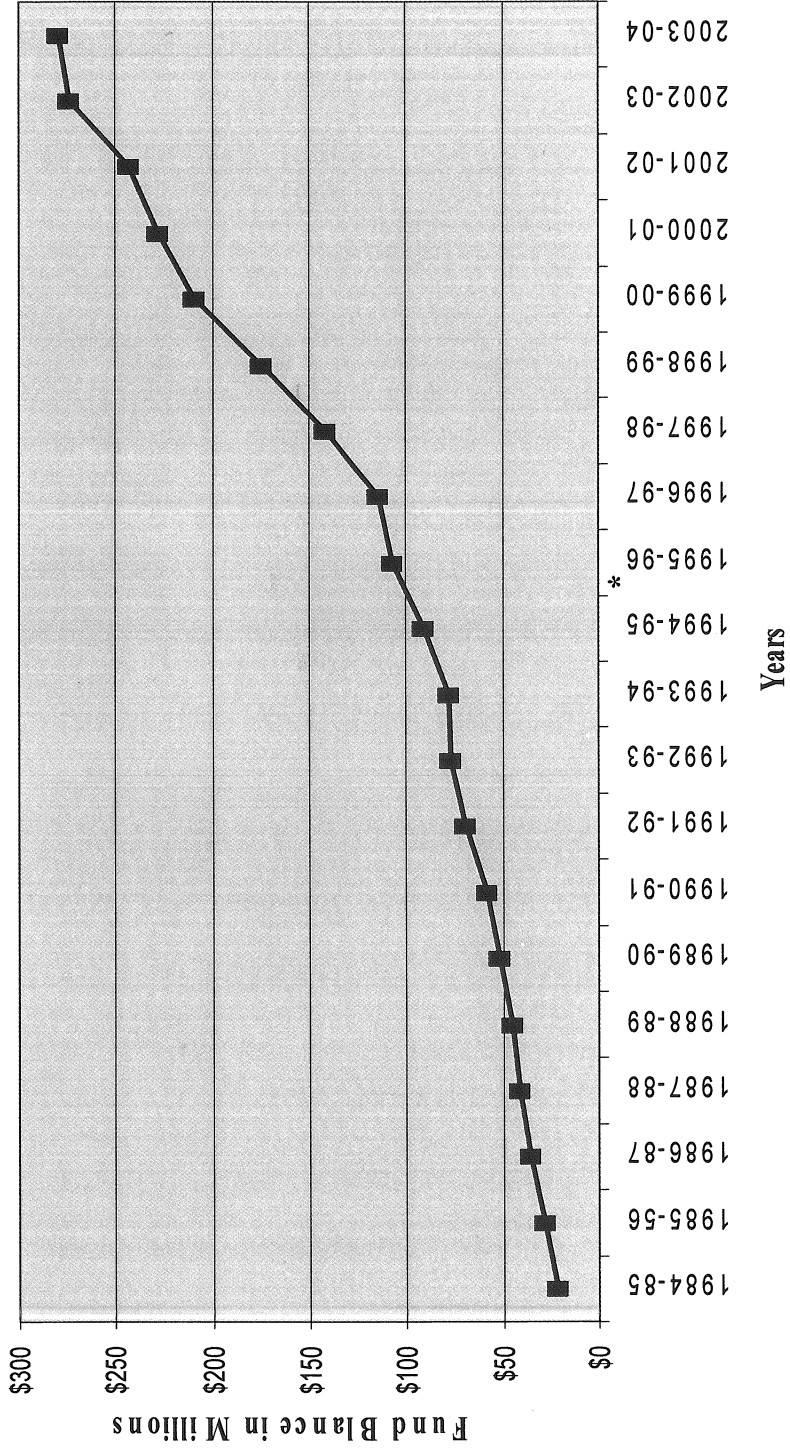
The initial volunteer chairman, Milton J. Womack, upon reaching the first goal of \$150 million, turned over the leadership to G. Lee Griffin. The Campaign Leadership Team was then expanded by Griffin from 19 to 35 members.

Several shifts in emphasis also were made for the remaining two years of the Campaign. As a result of the state's highly beneficial TOPS program that provides financial support of tuition for Louisiana students, the priorities for scholarship endowments were revised to focus more on graduate fellowships and non-resident, undergraduate and graduate scholarships. Important construction and renovation projects also moved up in the Campaign's priority list reflecting changes in academic needs and opportunities since the initial planning for the Campaign five years earlier.

Of special interest according to the Voluntary Support of Education 2002, Council for Aid to Education, LSU was ranked 19 out of 20 in state appropriations among its Southern peers in total support. With an endowment of \$202 million, a reported \$61.4 million in total support, a student body of 31,402, this amounts to \$4,946 per full-time student, compared to the Southern average of \$8,900 per student.

Looking back to 1992, using the same comparisons, LSU was ranked seventh reporting a total support of \$14.5 million and a student body of 26,138, which represented \$555 of support per student as compared to the University of Florida which held the first position reporting a total support of \$77.1 million, and a student body of 35,753, which represents \$2,156 of support per student.

# LSU Growth in Fund Balance



“...The quest for excellence in education – that something extra which separates greatness from adequacy – can be realized only through financial support over and above that given by the Legislature.  
 The LSU Foundation provides the machinery for the quest of excellence.  
 Every friend of the University is invited to join this quest.”

- General Troy Middleton, 1960

\* Prior figures reflect manual accounting system

## Other Fundraising Programs at The LSU Foundation

### **Board of Regents Support Fund**

One of the most popular programs of private philanthropy at LSU was the endowment of professorships. In 1991, the state implemented the Eminent Scholars Matching Grant (“8g”) program administered by the Board of Regents. It was later renamed the Board of Regents Support Fund (BRSF) and formed matching grants for professorship endowments. Donors have created 51 endowed chairs of \$400,000 or more and 364 endowed professorships of \$100,000 or more. In 2003, these aggregate endowments totaled \$87.5 million. Some 132 additional endowments were pledged and are in various stages of completion. These statistics included endowments of LSU and A&M College, the Paul M. Hebert Law Center and the LSU Agricultural Center.

Since its inception in 1991, LSU has acquired 750 scholarships (at a minimum of \$10,000 each), 307 professorships (at a minimum of \$100,000 each), and 44 chairs at a minimum of \$1 million each).

### **Corporate Matching Gift Program**

One of the distinctive aspects of philanthropy in the United States is the concept of corporate matching gifts. More than 7,500 U.S. companies match gifts made by their employees and retirees in accordance with various policies and matching ratios adopted by each company.

LSU benefited from many of these matching gift programs, especially those of the companies that had recruited LSU graduates. Alumni with these companies take advantage of their company’s matching gift programs, often with generous annual contributions to LSU. Among the corporate matching programs that have contributed the



most to LSU each year were ExxonMobil, Shell Oil, Marathon Oil, Freeport-McMoRan, KMPG, and General Electric.

### **Planned Gifts**

Additional known commitments to LSU through estate plans of individuals has been another source of revenue for the University. These individuals who have made documented commitments of gifts to LSU, usually a part of their retirement and estate plans. The methods utilized included wills, trusts, life insurance policies, retirement plans, savings plans, gift annuities and others. As of December 2004, the balance of known commitments was \$37 Million.

These figures represented only the bequests and other planned gifts from 189 individuals who had reported their intentions to the LSU Foundation. Most commitments are not reported and do not become known to the beneficiary until the contributions are actually received. Thus, the known commitments show only the “tip of the iceberg” of this category of philanthropy.

While the details of estate commitments are kept confidential, the Foundation does recognize those individuals who make commitments with membership in the *1860 Society*.

### **Live Oak Endowment**

Nearly 1,000 live oaks grace the landscape, giving the campus much of its aesthetic character and cooling shade. However, budget limitations deprived the trees of necessary care, and the adverse effects were sadly evident. Many of the trees were in a state of stress and decline, and a number was dying each year. The Foundation projected that correcting the problem would require approximately \$80,000 annually for disease treatment, pruning, mulching, fertilizing and barrier construction.

In support of Chancellor William E. “Bud” Davis’ drive to *Rekindle the Spirit of LSU*, in 1993, the LSU Foundation created a special fundraising campaign to help maintain and protect the magnificent live oaks on the LSU campus. Donors were invited to “*Endow an Oak*” for a one-time gift of as little as \$1,500 or as much as \$5,000, depending on the location of the tree selected.

In 2003, after 11 years, 190 oaks were fully endowed and several more were in process. As of December 2003, the *Endow an Oak* campaign had reached a total endowment of \$395,600.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **MEMPHIS NAP**

#### Unit of Analysis

This case study achieved the quintessential characteristic of striving towards a holistic understanding of cultural systems of action (Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg 1990). In this instance cultural systems of action refer to sets of interrelated activities—the implementation of the NAP—engaged by the actors—Memphis area alumni—in a social situation.

The Memphis area was chosen for this study because it represented a “satellite” group of LSU alumni, which this researcher believed would be less susceptible to confounding variables because there had been little prior contact from LSU. Until the initiation of the NAP, alumni in the Memphis area had not been contacted by LSU’s development staff and thus the area stood virtually undeveloped. Memphis was geographically far enough away from Louisiana — the Baton Rouge area in particular — that alumni were less likely to have heard news of LSU from an outside source, which may have affected their giving, involvement and attitudes toward LSU. This researcher believed the “virgin” population in Memphis would prove to be ideal for the proposed peer screening model and communications tool.

A census of LSU alumni in the Memphis, Tennessee, area was chosen in terms of the Venn Diagram Model, and following systematic selection according to mathematical guidelines. The Venn Diagram is made up of two or more overlapping circles, and is often used to show relationships between sets. Venn Diagrams are useful for examining similarities and differences in characters and in this situation, between sets of people.

Included in probability sample are all LSU alumni in: Memphis, Germantown, Oxford, Cordova, Oyersburg, Carlsdale, Grenada, Collierville, Jackson, Martin, Red Banks, Dywersonburg, Marion, Camden and Millington. The LSU Foundation's donor database (IBM AS 400), was queried for all LSU alumni within a 50-mile radius of Memphis, Tennessee, and yielded 1,272 total alumni records.

### Case Study Protocol

Literature also provided insight into the acceptance of an experimental prototype to perceive the singularity of the object of this study: the National Advancement Plan in Memphis (Martin and Cheung 2000; Parr, et. al. 1999; Sarkis 2000). Therefore, case study research methodology was used. This ensured the transformation from the local to the global for explanation.

The most significant aspect of this case study was to determine the effectiveness or success of the NAP. If the NAP was deemed successful, its duplication had merit and the power of its generalizability increased. This researcher sought evidence to prove with some degree of certainty that the NAP accomplished its goal.

The measures of success were deemed increased alumni giving, increased alumni involvement and improved alumni attitudes. These measures are determined logical evidence of the success of the plan. In each of these variables, the greater the level of effectiveness of the NAP.

Yin (1994) pointed out that because this case study relied on analytical generalization rather than statistical generalization, it permits logical generalization because if it is true in this one case in Memphis, it is likely to be true in all other cases.

To answer the three case study questions, two mail surveys were used. The population addressed in this study was comprised of LSU alumni who lived in the Memphis, Tennessee, area. Alumni were defined as individuals who earned a degree from LSU. Memphis area was defined as an area within a 50-mile radius of metropolitan Memphis.

A cross-sectional design mail-survey was chosen as the research instrument for this study because of its relatively low cost and because it was deemed the logical and appropriate research method needed to determine alumni involvement and attitudes. The survey was cross-sectional because the data were collected at one point in time from a selected group of people in a specific area. This study was empirical and quantitative and yielded statistically significant results that demonstrated external validity. These results were somewhat generalizable to other university foundations.

### Original Mail-Survey

A large amount of information was included in the original mail-survey. This information was collected and coded to determine if there were noticeable shifts in attitudes as the result of the implementation of the NAP.

Attitudes were coded 1 if favorable and 2 if unfavorable. Respondent terms such as, “good, favorable, excellent, I love LSU, great and the best,” were all coded 1. Respondents using language such as, “not good, terrible, LSU sucks, LSU stinks, and LSU leaves much to be desired,” were all coded 2. Involvement was coded using a nominal measure of 1 for yes and 2 for no. Giving was measured by comparing donors’ giving (dollar amount) pre-NAP to donor’s giving post-NAP.

To insure intercoder reliability, the procedure was duplicated by Annie Leonards, who acted as an objective second party. Following the same guidelines as above-noted, Leonards coded survey responses 1 if their reported attitudes were positive 2 if attitudes were negative and 9 for non- responses. Involvement was coded 1 for alumni involvement with LSU, 2 for no alumni involvement, and 9 for non-responses. Giving was entered based on the actual dollar amounts from each donor's personal giving, which was obtained through the Foundation's database. Once completed, these two separate coded sheets were compared and collated, thus insuring intercoder reliability.

Through careful planning, design and implementation, the survey was divided into several sections. A test survey was issued to 10 individuals for the purpose of refining, abbreviating and proofing. Components of the survey included: a cover letter; one-page, double-sided survey; and stamped, self-addressed, return envelope. All materials included the alumni's name and address for the purpose of future data specification and collection. The independent variables were giving, involvement and attitudes. Alumni involvement was defined as prior giving history (e.g., no past giving, no alumni involvement). (See Appendix A and B).

It is of particular significance to this researcher that 21 percent of the records to which the first survey were mailed contained "dirty" data. For the purpose of this research, "dirty" was defined as data which contained incorrect names, incorrect addresses, incorrect marital status, college degree, giving history and deceased individuals. This represents a significant problem that must be addressed by the LSU Foundation.

### Data Entry and Collection

As return surveys were received, data entry began. Undeliverable surveys were returned and each record was researched, correctly addressed and resent. If records were determined inactive or inaccurate, they were deleted from the database and correctly coded and removed from the survey population.

The data were compiled in an Excel spreadsheet and then imported into SPSS 10 for comparison and analysis. To increase external validity a census of LSU alumni in the Memphis area was used. The original sample size of 1,272 was adjusted to 975 because of mail returns and non-responders. This sample size made the study more manageable and still produce meaningful results with a certain level of explaining power. This study achieved internal validity through its replication techniques and is somewhat generalizable to other university foundations.

### Follow-up Survey

To determine alumni's attitudinal changes from the original survey, which was mailed in 2002, if any, pre-NAP data were compared to post-NAP data. A follow-up survey was mailed two years later, in 2004, to only those respondents who answered the original survey. This group represented 166 alumni. The follow-up survey was brief and questioned respondents regarding their involvement and attitudes toward LSU in order to determine if there were statistically significant positive or negative changes as a result of implementing NAP.

The results of this two year research project were entered and accessed to further validate findings. Along with the follow-up survey, an "About LSU" brochure, cover letter and pre-stamped, return envelope were included. (See Appendix C, D and E). Also

included in the follow-up survey were research questions that addressed what was believed to be a confounding variable: LSU Tigers winning the 2004 National Football Championship. Confounding, because when this research project began in 2002, LSU winning the National Championship was a remote possibility and thus was not considered as a potential variable that might influence alumni behavior. However, upon the conclusion of this project, in the eleventh hour, LSU won the championship and this event produced significant evidence that to a university, winning a national championship does effect alumni giving, involvement and attitudes.

#### Establish LSU Foundation Team

The LSU Foundation Team consisted of two to three members of LSU's development staff. The number of staff required for an area was determined by the number of alumni in that area. There were 1,272 alumni in the Memphis area; therefore, two to three staff members were deemed sufficient. These members were selected on a voluntary basis and according to the staff members who had the most contacts in the Memphis area. A Team Chair was established and all coordination efforts were orchestrated through this staff person.

#### Identify Key Transformational Leaders

To identify key transformational leaders, the LSU Team Chair conducted research to obtain the names of these individuals. As identified by Burns (1978), the term "transformational" related to an individual's ability to influence and thus have a transformational affect on their peers.

Based on Katz and Lazarsfeld's Two-Step Flow Theory (1965), regarding the flow of information and the importance of identifying the key transformational leaders who



because of their influence are able to influence the opinions of opinion followers.

By identifying these key informants, LSU has a clearly delineated plan for utilizing this interplay of influence, person-to-person.

Primary research was conducted to obtain biographical queries from the LSU Foundation's database. These reports included past giving history, giving propensity and personal involvement in matters pertaining to LSU. Personal involvement included whether the individual was a member of a board of directors, a member of an advisory council, part of an alumni chapter, or special group affiliated with the University, or if they were awarded an honor from a particular department or college. This often provided useful information in addition to their personal biographical history, which was highly instrumental in identifying prospective key individuals. These names were also reviewed by LSU's development staff for any background information or prior knowledge about the donor that was not readily accessible from the database. Once these names were identified, they were turned over to LSU Foundation's research and records department, who through donor files (an often overlooked resource of valuable information) were researched along with Internet resources and produced important information.

### Establish Volunteer Team

Once the list of key transformation leaders was identified, each individual was contacted by the LSU Team Chair and asked to participate in NAP as a Volunteer Team Member. During this process, several individuals were identified as leaders and approached by the LSU Team Chair and asked if they would be willing to serve as a Volunteer Team Chair.

Operating from the Two-Step Flow Theory (Katz 1965), the NAP utilized the pattern of the transmission of influence as a resource for the University to transmit its messages and gain influence with potential alumni supporters. Also, following the theory of Transformational Leadership (Burns 1978) regarding the significance of identifying key leaders through the Volunteer Team Chair and Members, the NAP tapped into this communication continuum.

The Volunteer Team Chair was identified and served as the primary contact for the LSU Team Chair. The Volunteer Team Chair proved a tremendous influence on the other Volunteer Team Members as well as highly instrumental in practical matters to the LSU Team. The Volunteer Chair offered a venue for the peer screening session and was useful in identifying other individuals to participate in the process. The Volunteer Team sponsored all meetings and gatherings in the area, as well as supplied additional names of key individuals to the alumni ranking list. Once the Volunteer Team Chair was selected, the LSU Team Chair coordinated the date, time and location of any future meetings.

The LSU Team Chair was responsible for preparing the materials necessary for the ranking session and their distribution. Volunteer Team Members were invited to a ranking session. The ranking session was defined as a meeting including the LSU Team and the Volunteer Team whereby the Volunteer Team ranked a list of area alumni provided by the LSU Team according to their propensity and proclivity for giving to LSU.

#### Peer Screening Process

The ranking session included the Team Chair, who briefed members on the ranking process and involved them in the ranking session. The ranking was confidential, and completed independently and members returned their ranking sheets to the Team Chair.

Ranking was coded as Levels 1, 2 and 3.

- Level 1:** Individuals who had the ability to give \$100,000 to LSU over their lifetime.
- Level 2:** Individuals who were able to give \$10,000 to LSU over several years.
- Level 3:** Individuals who may not have the propensity to make a major gift to LSU but were willing to volunteer and support the University in other ways.

After the ranking process was completed, the Team Chair delivered the completed lists to the LSU Foundation, and the research and records department collated and compiled the data into one unified master list. This master list of ranked alumni will be a valuable asset to LSU's development staff when they return to the Memphis area to raise awareness, solicit funds, recruit prospective students and faculty, encourage mentoring relationships and spread the University's message.

The completed lists were also distributed to the LSU Foundation's development staff, including academic deans and directors to aid them in identifying key leaders and donors in the Memphis area, and will be useful as LSU prepared for its second capital campaign.

This researcher believed that the NAP was an effective peer screening model and communications plan. It established a solid foundation of transformational leaders and second-tier support persons who were able to support the University in terms of their time, effort and money. Additionally, it provided a strong framework for future fundraising. This process can easily be replicated and implemented by other development officers at other university foundations and yielded a reliable, valid and practical approach to fundraising.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **EVALUATION OF THE NAP IN MEMPHIS**

The NAP accomplished its goals in the Memphis, Tennessee, area. Nine key alumni leaders were identified and agreed to become members of the NAP Volunteer Team. Of the nine members, two stepped forward and volunteered to serve as Co-chairs of the Volunteer Team. This Team met and rated the comprehensive list of LSU alumni in the Memphis area, achieving one of its goals.

The objective of the peer-screening process was to identify those key alumni (opinion leaders/transformational leaders) who were esteemed in their community and whose message would likely be accepted and transmitted through the identified communication continuum. The NAP accomplished this goal.

Alumni in the Memphis area represented a social stratum. The key opinion leaders were identified and exposed to information regarding LSU through the NAP. They in turn, passed this information on to other alumni. Through the implementation of the NAP this continuum was utilized, observed and found to be effective as measured by the three independent variables of this case study (alumni giving, involvement and attitudes) (Katz 1965).

Thus, as Burns' Transformational Leadership Theory states, the importance of identifying the key transformational leaders through the NAP's peer-screening model supports his assertion that when "one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation" (Burns 1978). In the case of the NAP, those higher levels were defined as higher levels of giving, increased involvement and improved attitudes.

Of the comprehensive list of 1,272 LSU alumni, 89 names were ranked by the Volunteer Team Members at Level 1, 2 and 3. Twenty-one alumni were ranked at Level 1, with giving potential of \$100,000 over their lifetime. Fifty alumni were ranked at Level 2, with giving potential of \$10,000 over several years. Eighteen alumni were ranked at Level 3, as individuals with a proven proclivity to support LSU in ways other than financial. In addition, 12 new donors were identified who were not on the original list. Of the 12 names, two were ranked at Level 1, and 10 were ranked at Level 2.

This list of ranked names is a valuable resource to LSU's development staff as they pursue networking and fundraising in the Memphis area in the future. In addition to this ranked list of alumni, development staff now have a specified channel of communicating LSU's message and a model for future outreach in this targeted area.

This thesis addressed three central case study research questions:

**RQ1: How does the National Advancement Plan effect LSU alumni philanthropy in the Memphis area?**

Statistical analysis revealed a significant positive correlation between the implementation of the NAP and alumni philanthropy in the Memphis area. Correlation were significant between giving and the NAP including zero as a value (.168, .01).. The p-value clearly indicates a significant correlation. (See Table 1 and 2).

The implementation of the NAP at LSU had a significant positive effect on alumni philanthropy in the Memphis area. Alumni philanthropy in the Memphis area totaled \$91,447, according to pre-NAP data gathered from each alumni's giving history, as compared to post-NAP data gathered after the implementation of the NAP, which revealed a total of \$155,247. This represented a 41 percent increase in post-NAP giving.

**Table 1.**

**Correlation between pre-NAP and post-NAP alumni philanthropy (including zero as value).**

**Correlations**

		PRENAP\$	POSTNAP\$
PRENAP\$	Pearson Correlation	1	.168**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	1159	1159
POSTNAP\$	Pearson Correlation	.168**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	1159	1165

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 2.**

**Correlation between pre-NAP and post-NAP alumni philanthropy (treating zeros as missing values).**

**Correlations**

		POSTNAP1	PRENAP1
POSTNAP1	Pearson Correlation	1	.996**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	100	86
PRENAP1	Pearson Correlation	.996**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	86	469

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**RQ2: How does the implementation of the National Advancement Plan effect LSU alumni involvement in the Memphis area?**

To assess a correlation between pre-NAP and post-NAP alumni involvement, cross-tabs were run and revealed no change in alumni involvement at LSU between pre-NAP and post-NAP data. Therefore, the findings suggest the implementation of the National Advancement Plan at LSU had no correlation on alumni involvement at LSU in the Memphis area. (See Table 3).

**Table 3.**  
**Cross-tabulation of pre-NAP and post-NAP alumni involvement.**

**PREINVL \* POSTINVL Crosstabulation**

Count		POSTINVL			Total
		1.00	2.00	9.00	
PREINVL	9.00	11	35	1119	1165
Total		11	35	1119	1165

**RQ3: How does the implementation of the National Advancement Plan effect LSU alumni attitudes in the Memphis area?**

Prior to the implementation of the NAP, alumni were mailed a survey and asked to comment on their attitudes about LSU. The original survey revealed that 87 percent of alumni had a positive attitude toward LSU, and 13 percent of alumni had a negative attitude toward LSU. Cross-tabs and Chi Square were run and revealed these results had a significant positive linear correlation between alumni attitudes pre-NAP and post-NAP at a p-value of .01. (See Table 4.)

**Table 4.**  
**Cross-tabulation of pre-NAP and post-NAP alumni attitudes.**

**PREATT \* POSTATT Crosstabulation**

Count		POSTATT			Total
		1	2	9	
PREATT	1	14	22	69	105
	2	2	6	11	19
	9	5	2	1031	1038
Total		21	30	1111	1162

The follow-up survey revealed improved attitudes about LSU. It was mailed to those alumni who responded to the original survey. Of the 166 follow-up surveys mailed, 71 surveys were returned completed, yielding a response rate of 43 percent. Statistical analysis revealed that the implementation of the National Advancement Plan had a positive linear correlation on alumni attitudes.

Further supporting this reported significance level, this study revealed of the 166 total respondents, 41 were College of Arts & Sciences graduates; 11 were College of Basic Science graduates; 27 were College of Business Administration graduates; 14 were College of Agriculture graduates; 16 were College of Engineering graduates and the remaining 57 graduates represented the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine, Law, Design, Journalism, Social Work and Music. Because this sample was a census sample and cross-sectional in design, the population revealed no major bias.

### Findings

A total of 1,272 original surveys were mailed, with an adjusted total of 975 surveys because of returns and non-responders. Two Hundred Sixty-three surveys were returned with no known forwarding address. Eighteen surveys were returned



undeliverable because alumni were deceased. Sixteen surveys were returned by respondents accompanied by a message saying they were not interested in participating in the survey. Thus, 166 completed and returned surveys were reported, which yielded a 17 percent response rate. The Association of Fundraising Professionals reports an average response rate for nonprofit fundraising mail-survey of seven to 10 percent. This study however, yielded a 17 percent response rate.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

Because of the success of the results of this study, we can support that there is potential for its use in other areas. The extant literature suggested a relationship between the NAP and the effectiveness measures of giving, involvement and attitudes (Mowday, Porter and Steers 1982). In the current study, the relationship between the NAP and alumni behavior was somewhat clear. We know that transformational leaders have an impact on the bottom-line of fundraising (Lowe, et. al. 1996). We also know from the present study that leadership correlates with behavior. The present research has given empirical support to what was hitherto been only a theoretical proposition.

The NAP operated from Katz and Lazarsfeld's Two-step Flow model regarding the predictable pattern of the flow of information and Burns' Transformational Leadership Theory regarding the significance of identifying key leaders to tap into the transmission of influence as a resource as the University transmitted its message and gained influence with potential alumni supporters.

The findings of this study validated the earlier findings. It supported the communication continuum identified by Katz and Lazarsfeld. It also supported the importance of the relationship and influence that transformational leaders have on followers. In this case identifying key transformational leaders through the peer screening model who in turn advocated and solicited on the University's behalf.

The results of this study were statistically significant and proved with 95 percent confidence that there was a positive linear correlation among two of the key independent

variables (alumni giving and attitudes), no correlation between one of the key independent variables (alumni involvement) and the dependent variable (implementation of the NAP).

### Confounding Variable

An unforeseen confounding variable to this study was LSU's victory in the 2003 National Football Championship and its effect on alumni giving levels, involvement and attitudes about LSU. This study began in December 2002, and the first research instrument was mailed shortly thereafter. One year later, the National Advancement Plan was implemented. Thereafter, a follow-up survey was mailed during February 2004, immediately following LSU's National Championship victory. The results of the follow-up research instrument questioned 166 alumni regarding their giving, involvement and attitudes of LSU subsequent to the first survey. Of the 71 returned completed surveys, 26 responders, or 36 percent, reported that LSU's National Championship victory influenced improved attitudes. (See Table 5).

Bivariate analysis found highly significant positive correlation between the variables of involvement (.563, .000) and attitudes (.678, .000), as the result of the National Championship and a strong negative correlation between the variable of giving (-.324, .001). This negative correlation may suggest that as the result of LSU winning the National Championship, alumni gave to athletic programs at the University instead of to the LSU Foundation. In fact, the statistical analysis of the confounding variable produced the strongest correlation between this variable and its effect on the three independent variables of giving, involvement and attitudes.

Because of the significance of this confounding variable (.01), it is impossible to predict with any certainty to what degree the three independent variables (alumni giving,

**Table 5.**

**Correlations between National Championship and post-NAP involvement, post-Nap giving and post-NAP Attitudes.**

**Correlations**

		NTLCHAMP	POSTNAP1	POSTINVL	POSTATT
NTLCHAMP	Pearson Correlation	1	-.324**	.563**	.678**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001	.000	.000
	N	1160	98	1160	1160
POSTNAP1	Pearson Correlation	-.324**	1	-.055	-.224*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.	.587	.025
	N	98	100	100	100
POSTINVL	Pearson Correlation	.563**	-.055	1	.757**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.587	.	.000
	N	1160	100	1165	1162
POSTATT	Pearson Correlation	.678**	-.224*	.757**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.025	.000	.
	N	1160	100	1162	1162

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

involvement and attitudes) affected the dependent variable (implementation of NAP). This study revealed significant evidence that LSU's National Championship played a role in the reported improved results. Thus, it is difficult, if not impossible, to measure the extent of the influence that the NAP and the National Championship victory play on alumni behavior and resulting effect on their giving, involvement and attitudes in the Memphis area.

However, we can report that LSU's victory in the 2003 National Championship had a statistically significant positive correlation to an increase of alumni giving, an increase in alumni involvement, and an improvement of alumni attitudes toward LSU.

### Limitations

This study focused on the alumni population in the Memphis, Tennessee, area only. Although alumni in this area bear common characteristics to LSU alumni nationwide, there may have been factors that limited the generalizability of these results. For example, this study concentrated on the Memphis area because it represented a satellite metropolitan area containing a sizeable number of alumni. This researcher believed that the results from this area would be less clouded by confounding variables. However, for this very reason, the results may have been deceptive of the LSU alumni population nationwide.

Because the sample size is small and the sample was limited to alumni in the Memphis area, generalizations from this study should be drawn with caution. A larger sample with a broader representation of LSU alumni nationwide might have strengthened this study's external validity.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **NAP — STAGE TWO**

#### NAP — Memphis

LSU's NAP implemented a peer screening model and communications plan. With this model in place, the LSU Foundation acted as a silo institution. The NAP identified names, which can be given to the development staff of the LSU Foundation. The staff in turn, can begin to cultivate and steward relationships with the identified alumni, announce plans of the next capital campaign and solicit donations. The development staff, supported by the department of research and records, the accounting department, and the offices of stewardship and donor relations can provide the infrastructure which can help insure NAP's success. However, without the staffing required to provide this infrastructure, the efforts and expense of identifying prospective donors may not achieve the ultimate goals of the NAP. Thus, it is the recommendation of this researcher that the Foundation hire additional staff in order to accommodate the increase in required output.

As a result of implementing the peer-screening process in Memphis, some 89 names of key individuals were identified. These names were rated as Level 1, 2 and 3. Each name warrants future cultivation and solicitation. An important consideration revealed by this study is whether the LSU Foundation has the adequate resources to support the follow-up efforts needed between staff and revealed alumni post-NAP. Without the resources, the will and a specific, detailed and directed plan of follow-up and completion, the NAP may fall short of its intended purpose.

The recommended initiative is to strategically plan and implement stage-two of the NAP from the finish-line to the start-gate, rather than the opposite, to successfully accomplish this goal this researcher recommends the following:

- Segment alumni according to ranking levels and graduates of colleges.
- Vice President of Development shall develop and publish a manual clearly delineating procedures for follow-up of names identified through the peer screening and the implementation of stage two.
- Plan semi-annual trips to the area to cultivate, solicit and steward contacts.
- Cultivation of key transformation leaders should include: repeated personal visits, phone contact, mail contact, etc.
- Plan to host a chancellor's reception in Memphis within two years.
- LSU Team Chair should attend as many LSU Alumni Association events in Memphis as is reasonable.

#### NAP — On a National Scale

For the purpose of this study, 30 metropolitan areas were identified using the criterion of those centers consisting of a population of between 10,000 and 1,000 alumni in the area. In addition to Memphis, Tennessee, the NAP has been implemented in the following areas: New Orleans, Lake Charles, Alexandria, Houma, Monroe, and Shreveport/Bossier City, Louisiana; Little Rock, Arkansas; Houston and Beaumont, Texas; New York, New York; Denver, Colorado; and Nashville, Tennessee.

Future sites for the implementation of the NAP are: Los Angeles, California; Fort Worth/Arlington, Dallas, Austin and San Antonio, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Jackson and Biloxi/Gulf Port, Mississippi; Birmingham and Mobile, Alabama; Atlanta, Georgia; Orlando and Tampa, Florida; Raleigh-Durham/Chapel Hill, North Carolina; and Washington DC, Virginia. (See Appendix F).

In each of these areas, it is recommended that the NAP be implemented.

However, caution and due diligence should be adhered to until an adequate infrastructure and plan for stage-two of the NAP are in place to accommodate the increased work-load prior to implementing new territories, lest successful results in these areas be compromised.



## **CHAPTER 9**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY**

Additional comparative study may have provided useful results. For example, it may have been insightful to note the implementation of the NAP as compared to another method of donor segmentation and plan of communication. we know that contact versus no contact will have some positive effect. The results of this study show that implementing a peer-screening model and plan of communication is certainly better than no attempt. However, we are not completely certain that this plan, the NAP, is the most successful plan.

Also, comparative study of the implementation of the NAP in the Memphis area versus implementation of the NAP in another area in a different region may have also provided meaningful results.

Additionally, these data come from an under-developed area (Memphis). The results of this study could be compared to results from a more highly developed area (Houston) and a comparative study conducted to determine if the results from the implementation of the NAP in both areas bear similarities and thus gain this researcher's complete confidence in these findings.

Better understanding of peer screening methods and communication tools and how they can be implemented for maximum impact will continue to be a concern for development staff and the administration of the University. Further research is recommended to advance the understanding of the motivations, incentives and deterrents that influence alumni to choose to financially support, become involved with and improve perceptions and attitudes of LSU.

Future research could explore the various tools for recruiting, cultivating and retaining relationships with alumni. Studies are needed to explore the effectiveness of various communication tools and prospect identification models. Investigation could also include how to better target changing markets, as well as less traditional segmented alumni. It is critical for the University to identify, communicate with, inform and influence its alumni in order to achieve the greatest level of success.

Needless to say, all of these recommendations for future study bear merit, yet fall outside the parameters established for this study.

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## APPENDIX A ORIGINAL COVER LETTER

December 23, 2002

«First\_Name»«Last\_Name»  
«Company\_Name»  
«Address\_Line\_1»  
«Address\_Line\_2»  
«City\_State\_Zip»

Dear «salutation» :

I am the director of public relations for the LSU Foundation and I am updating our files in preparation for the University's next campaign. Upon analyzing the data from the Memphis area, I noticed that there are large gaps of missing information. The University is depending upon you to help us fill in these gaps, so we can accurately access the effectiveness of the way we communicate with our alumni.

I am also a graduate student at the Manship School of Mass Communication at LSU. My thesis research is studying effective ways the University communicates with its alumni. I have chosen the Memphis area as my representative sample. Therefore, in addition to the University's need for this missing data, I also need the information in order to accurately determine my findings.

The president of the LSU Foundation and the dean of the Manship School's graduate program are well informed of this research project and are supportive of its goal. I assure you that any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential. Your assistance is critical to the effective analysis of our University's communication methods.

The attached survey has two components, which include questions concerning demographic information and a simple questionnaire regarding your opinions of LSU. Please complete the survey and return to me in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope. Also, if you would like a report of the survey findings, I am happy to furnish them to you at the aggregate level.

I sincerely appreciate your help in this regard. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this letter, complete the attached survey, and mail back to me in the enclosed return envelope.

Regards,

Elizabeth Nealy  
LSU Foundation

Enclosures

**APPENDIX B  
ORIGINAL SURVEY**

Elizabeth Neary  
P.O. Box 123  
Memphis, TN 38111

- ☐ **Info Correct**  
☐ **Changes as noted**

**LSU Alumni Survey**  
**Please complete the following:**

LSU class of: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐  
Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Marital Status: Single ☐ Married ☐ Divorced ☐ Widowed ☐  
LSU Degree: Undergraduate ☐ Graduate ☐ Ph.D., J.D., M.D. ☐

Which of the following best describes your household's annual income?

- ☐ \$25,000 but less than \$50,000  
☐ \$50,000 but less than \$100,000  
☐ \$100,000 but less than \$150,000  
☐ \$150,000 or more

How would you rate the importance of your degree to your professional success?

- ☐ Very important  
☐ Somewhat important  
☐ Not very important  
☐ Not at all important

How would you rate the importance of your degree to your personal happiness?

- ☐ Very important  
☐ Somewhat important  
☐ Not very important  
☐ Not at all important

Do reports from the media in the Memphis area  
reflect LSU in a positive light?

Yes ☐ No ☐

On a national scale, do you consider LSU respected by the media? Yes ☐ No ☐

What is your overall opinion of LSU? \_\_\_\_\_

What prompted you to you attend LSU? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you recommend LSU to potential students? Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you contributed to LSU in the last year? Yes ☐ No ☐

Last 3 - 5 years: ☐ Last 5 - 10 years: ☐

If you have made a contribution to LSU, what prompted you give? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have children that attend/attended LSU? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you contribute to LSU because you are a graduate? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you contribute to LSU because your spouse is a graduate? Yes ☐ No ☐

Would you consider including LSU in your estate planning? Yes ☐ No ☐

What program matters most to you at LSU? (Check all that apply)

- Sports ☐  
Academic ☐  
Alumni Events ☐  
Research ☐  
History/Tradition ☐  
Other? \_\_\_\_\_



How do you currently stay informed of what's happening at LSU? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like more regular communication from LSU? Yes ☐ No ☐

If so, in what format? ☐ Newsletter, Magazine

☐ Web updates

☐ Personal Contact

Other? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you been contacted in the last 3 years by anyone from LSU? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you remember who contacted you? ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ LSU Foundation

☐ Tiger Athletic Foundation

☐ LSU Alumni Association

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

In the past, who influenced your attitude most about LSU?

☐ Friend

☐ Representative from LSU

☐ Family Member

☐ Local Media

☐ Classmate

☐ National Media

☐ Business Associate

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Currently, who would most likely influence your attitude about LSU?

☐ Friend

☐ Representative from LSU

☐ Family Member

☐ Local Media

☐ Classmate

☐ National Media

☐ Business Associate

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation in this LSU research project and our efforts to better LSU. This information will remain strictly confidential.

**Please return in the self-addressed and stamped envelope, or fax to:**

**LSU Foundation**  
Elizabeth Nealy  
3838 West Lakeshore Drive  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808  
Phone: 225/578-3811  
Fax: 225/578-0530  
Email: [enealy@lsufoundation.org](mailto:enealy@lsufoundation.org)

**APPENDIX D  
FOLLOW-UP SURVEY**

**Affix Label Here**

**Memphis Area Alumni Follow-up Survey**

**Please complete the following:**

Has your opinion of LSU changed in the last two years? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, would you say your opinion of LSU has: ☐ Gotten much better  
☐ Gotten better  
☐ Stayed the same  
☐ Gotten worse  
☐ Gotten much worse

Have you been contacted by anyone from LSU in the last two years? Yes ☐ No ☐

Who from LSU has contacted you? ☐ LSU Foundation staff  
☐ LSU Alumni Association staff  
☐ student LSU  
☐ LSU Athletic staff  
Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What factor has had the greatest affect on your opinion of LSU in the last two years?

- ☐ Personal visits from LSU staff
- ☐ Favorable media reports about LSU
- ☐ Direct mail from LSU
- ☐ LSU's National Championship victory

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you become involved with any LSU organizations in the last two years? Yes ☐ No ☐

Have you contributed to LSU in the last two years? Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, have your contributions to LSU increased in the last two years? Yes ☐ No ☐

Approximately how much have you contributed to LSU in the last two years? \$ \_\_\_\_\_

What factor has had the greatest influence on your increase in contributions in the last two years?

- ☐ Personal visits from LSU Staff
- ☐ Favorable media reports about LSU
- ☐ Direct mail from LSU
- ☐ LSU's National Championship victory

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your participation in this LSU research project and our efforts to better LSU.  
This information will remain strictly confidential.

**Please return in the self-addressed and stamped envelope, or fax to:**

**LSU Foundation**  
Elizabeth Nealy  
3838 West Lakeshore Drive  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808  
Phone: 225/ 578-3811 or 800/452-7928  
Fax: 225/ 578-0530  
email: [enealy@lsufoundation.org](mailto:enealy@lsufoundation.org)

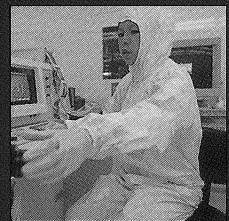
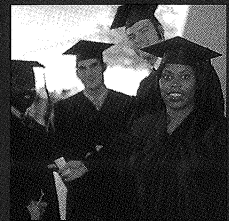
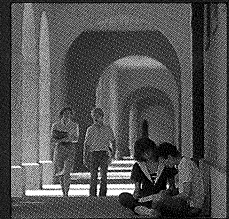
# FOUNDATIONS *of* EXCELLENCE

AT LSU

Louisiana State University is a national and international leader, drawing talented faculty and students to its campus, one of a handful of campuses recognized by the American Society of Landscape Architects as among the nation's "notable and treasured landscapes."

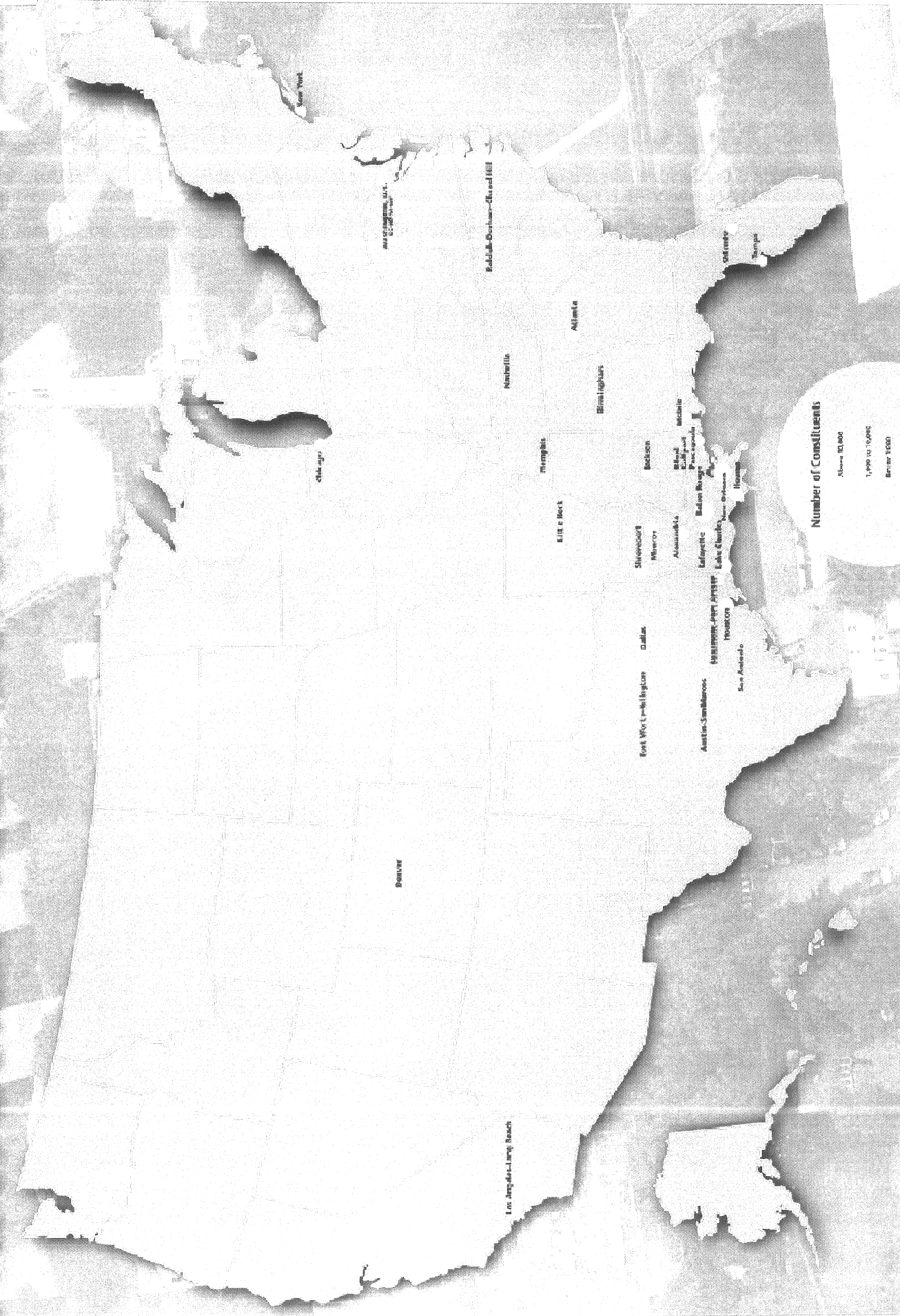
LSU has identified 12 programs as foundations of excellence—biological sciences, chemical engineering, chemistry, English, French, geography, geology and geophysics, information systems and decision sciences, mass communication, mathematics, music, and physics and astronomy. Targeted for enhanced resource allocations, these programs have been selected because each has sufficient strength to advance to levels that will command national and international attention, heightening LSU's reputation as a rising public research university.

These 12 programs are the foundations of excellence on which LSU's students, faculty, and staff are building to make the University a leading center of learning and discovery for the 21st century.



# LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY

## National Advancement Plan



## VITA

Elizabeth Nealy, a Baton Rouge native, earned her bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of Phoenix in 2001, and completed her master's degree in mass communication from Louisiana State University in 2004. She hopes to continue her academic career by pursuing her doctorate in mass communication in the Fall of 2004.

Nealy is currently the director of donor relations at the LSU Foundation and has been since 2001. She has held various development positions for the LSU Foundation and the LSU Alumni Association.

Her academic awards include, the University of Phoenix Alumni Scholarship from 1998 to 2001; UOP Dean's Honor Roll from 1998 to 2001; CASE IV Scholarship in 2001; and was inducted into the National Society of Collegiate Scholars in 2002.

Nealy currently serves on the board of directors of the Cadets of the Ole War Skule as the director of communications; Chapter XXX Special Forces Association as the director of public relations; the board of governors of the LSU Faculty Club as secretary; and past treasurer of the LSU Women's Faculty Club.

She is a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Public Relations Society of America, Public Relations Society of Louisiana, Southern Public Relations Federation, Association of Fundraising Professionals, Women in Philanthropy Institute, Louisiana CASE, Baton Rouge Art Gallery, Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana Historical Society. She also serves as a Wish-granter for the Make-a-Wish Foundation, and as judge for the 57<sup>th</sup> and 58<sup>th</sup> Voice of Democracy Contest sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

She has served as a guest lecturer at LSU in the fields of public relations, ethics in communication and public relations writing.

Nealy currently resides in Baton Rouge. She has four children: daughter, Leigh, senior at LSU in accounting; son, Scott, junior at LSU in biochemistry; son, Neal, stationed at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas; and daughter Abigail, at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Montana.